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forms. When did they cease to be merely psychic phenomena and become the vehicles of divine revelation?

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### PODECHARD'S INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIASTES.<sup>1</sup>

The Abbé Podechard, professor in the Catholic Faculty of Theology at Lyon, has published a commentary on Ecclesiastes in the "Études bibliques" in which Lagrange's *Juges*, Dhorme's *Samuel*, and Van Hoonacker's *Petits prophètes* appeared. Indeed the series is much more than a series of commentaries; it includes such studies as Lagrange's *Religions sémitiques* and his *Messianisme chez les Juifs*, Dhorme's *Choix de textes religieux assyro-babyloniens*, Jaussen's *Coutumes des Arabes*, and Vincent's *Canaan d'après l'exploration récente*. The present addition to the series fully maintains the reputation established by its predecessors for learning and scholarly acuteness.

The Book of Ecclesiastes is one of the most difficult in the biblical canon. It has called forth many commentaries, some of which are voluminous. Ginsburg's *Book of Ecclesiastes* (London, 1861) contained 521 pages, while C. H. H. Wright's *Ecclesiastes* (London, 1883), reached 516 pages. Podechard's volume (499 pages) almost reaches these limits. When the size of his pages and type are taken into account, Podechard's work contains more material than either of those mentioned. *Ecclesiastes* in the "International Critical Commentary" contains but 212 pages, while no recent German commentator devotes more space to it. Of the body of Podechard's book 212 pages are devoted to introduction. Here the following topics are treated: canonicity; history of interpretation; analysis of the book; the language of Ecclesiastes; Ecclesiastes and Ben Sira; Ecclesiastes and Wisdom; Ecclesiastes and the apocalyptic literature; Ecclesiastes and the doctrines of the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes; Ecclesiastes and Greek philosophy; later historic plan of the book; author and date; style and metrical form; composition; teaching of Qoheleth; the text and versions. Most of these topics are treated in an exhaustive manner, though in the history of the interpretation Ginsburg is far more complete than Podechard. For the modern scholar, however, the history of the interpretation is not the most important thing and need not be fully given in every commentary. The treatment of all the topics exhibits wide learning, independence of

<sup>1</sup> *L'Ecclésiaste*. Par E. Podechard. Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, J. Gabalda, L'Editeur, Rue Bonaparte, 90; 1912. xvii+499 pages. 8vo. Fr. 12.

thought, and sound judgment. The latest literature of all shades of opinion is freely used. The author's general position closely accords with that of McNeile and Barton, though he differs in some details from both.

Podechard begins his discussion of authorship with the statement that it is useless to attempt to refute the ancient opinion that Solomon was the author of the book. For such refutation he refers his readers to two articles by Condamin in *Revue biblique* for 1900. The difficulty, he says, is not to exclude the time of Solomon, but to fix upon the actual date of composition. After full discussion of all the data, he concludes that it was probably composed in the last part of the third century B.C.

Podechard, like McNeile and Barton, holds that the epilogue was added by a later hand, and that the book was retouched here and there by a *Chasid* and some *Hakam* glossators. To the epiloguist, whom Podechard believes to be a disciple of the author, he attributes not only 12:9-12, but 1:2; 7:27-28, and 12:8. To the *Chasid* he ascribes 2:26a, b; 3:17; 7:26b; 8:2b, 5-8, 11-13; 11:9c; 12:1a, 13, 14. To the *Hakam* glossators he assigns 4:5, 9-12; 5:2, 6a; 6:7; 7:1-12, 18-22; 8:1, 2a, 3-4; 9:17-10:4, 10-14a, 15-20; 11:1-4, 6. This list differs in details both from McNeile's and Barton's, and in the writer's judgment is not nearer the truth. Chap. 11, vs. 1, may be a proverbial expression, but could not Qoheleth himself have quoted it? It is so consonant with his thought, that it seems unnecessary to deny it to him. Again, the proverbs may indeed come from different times as Podechard thinks, but it is not thereby made improbable that one hand added them. One who gathers up proverbs necessarily takes them from different centuries. Finally, it seems to the reviewer that there is no sufficient reason for distinguishing between the *Hokma* glossator and the epiloguist. The same devotee of wisdom may well have been the disciple of Qoheleth, who did the whole.

These are, however, difficult points on which judgments are bound to differ. The striking thing is that three of the recent commentators on Ecclesiastes, who belong to widely different schools of theologic thought, agree exactly in the broad outlines of their criticism of the book, and so nearly agree in details. Podechard, like McNeile and Barton, holds that Qoheleth was uninfluenced by Greek philosophy and that his language is not colored by Grecisms. Such agreement is refreshing. Coming as it does after the widely divergent theories of Bickell, Siegfried, and Haupt, it seems to indicate that at last the criticism of Ecclesiastes is reaching solid ground.

On some details of exegesis there will always be room for differences

of opinion. Thus in spite of Podechard's two pages of closely printed critical matter, it still seems to the reviewer that in Eccles. 3:11, הָעֵלָם cannot mean "world," but that the pointing must be changed to obtain the meaning "ignorance."

Podechard has, regardless of differences of opinion concerning details, laid all biblical scholars under great obligation by producing one of the best commentaries in existence upon Ecclesiastes.

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### A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE

In his *Sociological Study of the Bible*,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Louis Wallis accepts freely the results of historical criticism, but does not believe that modern scholars have appreciated fully the connections between the facts of Hebrew history and the development of an ethical monotheism. According to this writer, the Hebrew kingdom was born "at the point of coalescence between Amorite civilization and Israelite nomadism." The Hebrew tribes fresh from the desert conquer the hill country of Western Palestine but fail to conquer the strong city-states held by the original inhabitants, the Amorites. In time this pre-Israelitish population of Palestine coalesces with the Israelites by means of intermarriages and treaty alliances. The Hebrew nomads bring to this union their tribal God, Yahweh, who represents the "brotherhood *mishpat*" or *social justice*; while the Amorites, the cultured, civilized owners and tillers of the soil, contribute their Baal-worship which is inseparably associated with a system of *social injustice* in which a small upper class rules and the rest of the population is reduced to a condition of slavery. Hebrew history is then a continuous struggle between this selfish, oppressive Amorite power, centering in the cities, and an oppressed justice-loving peasantry who remember the old "justice" of the desert. The "regular" prophets, for the most part the scriptural "false prophets," support the ideas inherited from the Amorites, and the "insurgent" prophets contend for the ideals of their nomadic Israelite ancestors. Every great struggle in Hebrew history is thus a contest between "Amoritism" or social injustice, and "*mishpat*" or social justice. The former becomes identified with Baal-worship and the latter with Yahwism. Thus Yahweh becomes the representative of an ethical ideal, and with the destruction

<sup>1</sup> *Sociological Study of the Bible*. By Louis Wallis. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1912. xxxv+308 pages. \$1.50 net.